



ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) study confirms health risks from mobile phones

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NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26: Continuous use of cell phones can pose a serious threat to your reproductive health, says a study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The Preliminary results of the study have indicated significant reduction in the testicular size, weight and sperm count due to the Radio Frequency Radiation (RFR) emitted from cell phones.

Experts at the division of reproductive health, mobile and nutrition of ICMR are working on a long-term study on a larger sample size to find out the effects of the RFR. Experts say the results of the preliminary study showing the adverse effects, "may be possible if not probable". "Even as the literature does not establish evidence about the safety or risk of the RFR, but the growing scientific evidence have of late indicated towards the bio and adverse effects of the RFR," said an expert with ICMR.

Further work is on by the council to get a broader view on it. It has developed a protocol to study "effects of radio frequency radiation emitted from cell phone and cell masts on male reproduction." A task force, consisting of various scientists has also been developed and has been working on the "hazards of environment pollution and changing lifestyle on reproduction".

To start with, the research council has short listed the National Capital to conduct the study and then proposes to reach other metropolitans. "The study is proposed to be carried out as a pilot study in Delhi at different sites for two years duration. Based on the results from this study, there is a possibility to extend it to other metros," added the expert. A survey done by the retired technical experts of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) earlier had shown radiation power levels much above the permissible levels.

According to the International Commission of Non Ionising Radiation protection (WHO and EU) radiation power level should be 600 microwatt/cm². In most areas of Delhi, the levels are found to be as higher as 7620 microwatt/m².

Work in the same direction has earlier been also done by experts like Prof J Behari of School of Environmental Sciences, JNU. His department had found out that chronic exposure to microwave and mobile radiations causing increase in double strand DNA break in sperm and brain cells of the rats.

Experts recommend against keeping mobile phone in one's trouser or shirt pocket.

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The doctors say that this is a new observation, which needs to be looked into with a broader prospect. "Uninterrupted usage of mobile phones and problems like brain tumour, heart attack and even cancer have been linked with. But the thing that needs to be looked into are the other compounding factors to establish the cause and effect relationship between the two," said Dr NP Singh, professor of medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi.